AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A digital communication device comprising a plurality of interconnected modules for processing ~~and/or~~ and handling received data signals, wherein said interconnected modules each comprise monitoring means for monitoring whether ~~(monitoring means)~~ said data signal is erroneous without manipulating or analyzing bits or bytes of said data signal, and for generating an output data signal having a predetermined signal status ~~(squelched data signal)~~ if said data signal is erroneous.

2. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The digital communication device according to claim 1, characterized by comprising:

a first I/O module for receiving a data signal and transmitting two copies of said data signal

at least two interconnected modules for processing said data signal, wherein a first group of said interconnected modules receiving said first copy of said data signal and a second group ~~(16)~~ of said interconnected modules receiving said second copy of said data signal; and

a second I/O module for receiving said copies of the data signal transmitted by said interconnected modules, said second I/O module comprising means for monitoring said received copies of said data signal and transmitting those copy of said data signal which has not said predetermined signal status.

3. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The communication device according to claim 1, wherein said monitoring means comprises a threshold detector.

4. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The communication device according to claim 1, wherein said monitoring means comprises a frequency detector.

5. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The communication device according to claim 1, which it is a cross-connect device and wherein said interconnected modules are switching matrix components.

6. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The communication device according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined signal status of said output data signal is zero ~~(low signal)~~.

7. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The communication device according to claim 2, wherein said first I/O module comprises monitoring means for monitoring ~~(monitoring means)~~ said received data signal and for generating an output data signal having a predetermined signal status ~~(squelched data signal)~~ if said received data signal is erroneous.

8. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The communication device according to claim 2, wherein said first I/O module receives a copy of the data signal via a protection line [[ ]]and comprises monitoring means for monitoring ~~(monitoring means)~~ said received data signal supplied via a working line and for transmitting said copy of said data signal if said received data signal is erroneous.

9. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method for processing a data signal within a communication device, comprising the steps of:

receiving an input data signal;

checking the input data signal whether it is erroneous without manipulating or analyzing bits or bytes of said data signal;

if the input data signal is erroneous, generating a data signal with a predetermined signal status, and

transmitting said data signal as an output data signal.

10. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method according to claim 9, wherein the step of verifying said input data signal comprises ~~the step of~~ checking ~~it's~~ a frequency of said input data signal.

11. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method according to claim 9, wherein the step of verifying said input data signal comprises ~~the step of~~ checking ~~the~~ a signal level and comparing the signal level ~~it~~ with a threshold value.

12. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method according to claim 9, wherein said output data signal is checked whether it has said predetermined signal status, and if so, a copy of said input data signal is transmitted as said output data signal.